



THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

JCSM-554-67  
14 October 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Increased B-52 Capability in Southeast Asia (U)

1. (MC) In order to provide the capability to respond to operational situations in Southeast Asia which require the immediate application of significantly increased firepower, plans have been developed for a rapid increase in the B-52 ARC LIGHT sortie rate from 800 to as much as 1200 sorties per month.
2. (MC) ARC LIGHT forces have been employed in virtually every major operation in Southeast Asia during the past 18 months, and supported 20 of 22 ground operations which resulted in heavy enemy losses. In April 1967, with 800 sorties per month authorized, COMUSMACV had over 300 B-52 suitable targets in his inventory for which forces were not available. This backlog of targets has continued to grow during normal operations and necessitates continuing attention to priorities and the judicious assignment of available sorties. However, the backlog of unstruck targets reaches serious proportions when it becomes necessary to concentrate ARC LIGHT sorties in one area as has recently occurred in the DMZ. During the month of September 1967, 89 percent of all ARC LIGHT sorties were flown in the area of the DMZ. During this period, only 93 sorties were available for urgent requirements in other areas. Therefore, it is considered advisable to have a standby capability to apply rapidly and sustain as required increased ARC LIGHT pressure in the event an enemy buildup should present another significant threat to our forces similar to the recent situation in I Corps Tactical Zone.
3. (MC) The Air Force indicates that an on-call surge capability for up to 40 sorties per day (1200 per month), sustainable for 30 days, can be developed by taking the following actions:

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a. Move 9 additional B-52 aircraft and crews from the CONUS to Guam for integration into the B-52 force in flying the current 800 sortie program. Pre-positioning of these 9 B-52 aircraft would not result in any additional SIOP alert degradation.

b. Identify 19 B-52/5 KC-135 aircraft and crews at CONUS bases to begin movement within 72 hours to Guam upon execution of the emergency surge capability. Deployment of the 19 aircraft and crews would result in 7 additional alert sortie degradates. The deployed B-52 force would be capable of attaining and holding the emergency surge sortie rate (40 sorties per day) until arrival of the additional augmenting CONUS aircraft. Five or more aircraft from Guam would be recovered at U Tapao and operated from that base for the duration of the emergency surge period; thereby increasing the B-52 inventory at U Tapao to 20 or more aircraft as facilities permit.

c. Pre-position at Guam and U Tapao 55,000 additional bombs to provide a 45 day SAC stock level at a 1200 sortie rate.

d. Identify a number of munitions handlers and other support personnel in PACOM and CONUS for immediate deployment upon implementation of the surge capability.

e. Pre-position some support equipment and vehicles at Guam and U Tapao.

4. (S) By constructing the necessary base facilities at U Tapao to support a 30 B-52 main operating base (MOB), either the existing 800 sortie rate or an emergency surge could be sustained with fewer aircraft at substantially reduced cost. The construction cost for such an expansion is estimated at approximately \$30 million. The 15 B-52s now at U Tapao are being flown at a rate of one sortie per aircraft per day, for a total of 450 sorties per month. If the remaining 350 sorties of the present rate were flown from U Tapao instead of Andersen, a saving of approximately \$3.5 million per month could be realized in direct aircraft operating cost. If, under surge or sustained conditions the U Tapao operation were increased to the 30 B-52 MOB capacity of 900 sorties per month, the monthly saving would be approximately \$4.5 million more than if 450 sorties were flown from U Tapao and 450 were flown from Andersen. In either case the saving in direct aircraft operating cost would off-set the construction cost at U Tapao over a period of seven to nine months.

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5. (S) The requirement for, duration and frequency of surge periods cannot be predicted with accuracy. Surge requirements could occur for as little as 19 days or less, based on experience during Operation Cedar Falls, or for as much as 60 days or possibly longer based on recent experience in the DMZ. In addition, a requirement may develop to provide a surge capability in more than one area of operations simultaneously.

6. (TS) The following munitions plan is designed to provide sufficient stocks in view of the above:


a. M-117 bomb production must be maintained at a level of 75,000 per month for November and December 1967, and 65,000 per month thereafter; (1) to maintain Southeast Asia munitions reserves (strategical and tactical forces) at a 45-day level with present consumption (SAC 800 sorties per month); (2) to build up the JCS Reserve to a level which could support an ARC LIGHT surge to 1200 sorties per month for two months pending increased production output.

b. Munitions to support up to 60 days of surge operations at a 1200 sortie rate can be provided from in-theater operating stocks which would in turn be reconstituted from the JCS Reserve, providing assets exist. When surge requirements either singly or cumulatively are forecasted to be in excess of 60 days, prompt notification will be provided to the Department of Defense in order that production would be increased to meet consumption requirements and restore Southeast Asia stockage levels.

7. (MC) The Joint Chiefs of Staff therefore recommend:

a. The normal ARC LIGHT sortie rate remain at least 800 per month for the present, with sufficient forces deployed as indicated in paragraph 3 to insure a capability for a rapid increase in ARC LIGHT sorties to as many as 1200 per month when directed by CINCPAC, in coordination with CINCSAC, based on the requirements of the operational situation.

b. The immediate establishment of M-117 production levels at 75,000 per month for November and December 1967 and 65,000 per month thereafter to provide the capability for 60 days of surge operations and to maintain Southeast Asia munitions reserves.



c. The establishment of procedures to obtain approval, when necessary, for increases in production of the M-117 and MK-82 bombs to meet consumption requirements and restore Southeast Asia stockage levels in the event that surge operations extend beyond 60 days.

d. Obtaining approval from the Government of Thailand to increase the number of B-52s based at U Tapao from 15 to 30.

e. Authorization and funding of additional facilities at U Tapao for a 30 B-52 MOB as a matter of urgent priority.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:



HAROLD K. JOHNSON  
Acting Chairman  
Joint Chiefs of Staff